2018 JCA Budget Hearing
South Dakota State University

How is the university responding and/or adapting to changing high-demand credentials/jobs?

South Dakota State University has the ultimate responsibility to create and drive new knowledge, teach important skills for our future leaders, and respond to critical problem solving challenges. We proudly accept these challenges and perform all of our work with a commitment to our new core values: people-centered, creativity, integrity, diversity and excellence.

South Dakota State University has developed a system to evaluate the changing landscape of high-demand credentials and jobs as a component part of its Strategic Enrollment Management process. As part of this planning process, each academic department will regularly conduct a three phase review. Phase I is a qualitative discipline forecast, Phase II is a quantitative enrollment forecast, and Phase III is a review of student market demand. One outcome of this exercise is identification of credentials and jobs that are in high workforce need as well as those that have emerged, or are emerging as, high student demand. This awareness then guides academic department planning efforts consistent with the mission of South Dakota State University, which has programs in place and/or is well positioned to respond to high demand jobs/careers in the health sciences (pharmacy, nursing, medical lab science, dietetics, athletic training, and pre-professional health programs), technology, engineering, liberal arts/social sciences, business and management, agriculture, hospitality and the service industry, and skilled trades. Our evaluation and assessment allow us to ensure we operate under proper and efficient structures; provide documentation for potential re-alignments; and allow for the deployment of resources to ensure we are good stewards.

Among the strategies utilized by SDSU to address high-demand credentials/jobs is to increase degree program access by offering programs at remote locations and online. For example, SDSU offers online Bachelor's degrees in Early Education and Care, Geography, Medical Laboratory Science, Nursing, Psychology, and Sociology. Online Master's degree programs include Educational Administration, Public Health, Nursing, Family Financial Planning, and Sociology. Online certificate programs in Data Science, Family Financial Planning, Financial and Housing Counseling, Merchandising, Native Communities and Economic Development are available. Some degree programs are also offered at attendance centers and remote locations across the state. One such example is nursing program options available not only in Brookings, but also in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Aberdeen.

South Dakota State University has also strategically moved to offer more stackable credentials/degrees including both certificates and associate degrees. These programs have been designed and deployed in response to workforce demand and are fully transferable into a BOR authorized SDSU program. One example is an Associate of Science (A.S.) in Manufacturing Technology program, which prepares students for entry-level technical positions in advanced manufacturing and its supply chain that is fully stackable toward a B.S. degree in Operations Management. Another example is an Associate of Science (A.S.) degree program in Human Development and Family Services, which prepares students for careers assisting prevention specialists, advocates, and educators working with children and families that is fully stackable toward a B.S. degree in Human Development and Family Studies. A certificate program example recently approved is the Workplace Intercultural Competence Certificate, which prepares graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to provide management of diverse workplaces in a variety of settings including business, construction, and agriculture.

SDSU has also worked to respond to high demand credentials/jobs by building on existing partnerships with the South Dakota Technical Institutes and Tribal Colleges in the state. The emphasis of these collaborations has been on workforce ready programs in fields such as agriculture, construction and operations management, and human services. Additional partnerships have been developed between the university and businesses/organizations that are designed to meet high demand credentials/jobs. Products of these partnerships include internships and experiential learning programs, providing students with high-impact educational activities that enhance mastery of academic content and development of transferable skills needed for success in the contemporary workplace.

What is the biggest challenge(s) the university is facing in the next 1, 3, 5 years? What can be done to address the identified challenge(s)?

A common theme for all of our challenges, as well as the potential solutions, is ensuring the citizens of South Dakota understand that investing in education expands job opportunities, boosts South Dakota's competitiveness, and supports the state's growing economy.

Faculty and Staff compensation: At a university, our people — our faculty, our researchers, and those who keep everything operating — are our most important asset. As a major research university, we are competing on a national level to attract and retain top talent. In order to maintain a tradition of excellence at South Dakota State University, we must be able to attract and retain talented faculty and staff. Our talent is what will allow us to be a premier land grant institution. Additionally, this will allow us to help the state as we continue to be one of its top economic engines, sharing our knowledge, training and preparing students for the workforce, and adding to South Dakota's economic outlook.

Maintenance and growth of accreditation standards in an era of level financial resources. Accredited programs clearly depict academic excellence. Survey information supports the fact that prospective students and parents are looking at accreditation when deciding on a University. An accredited program assists employers determine the validity of programs of study and whether a graduate is qualified to perform the work expected. Lastly, accredited programs assist our students in being accepted to professional and graduate schools. SDSU currently has 40 accredited programs with 10 more in process. We will continue to strive for high quality programs in all academic fields with the ultimate goal of attaining accreditation for all programs having that ability.

Resources for teaching, research and outreach. Faculty and student research, innovation, education and learning must occur in spaces to allow them opportunities to succeed. For example, Pharmacy and Nursing students need to be educated in modern classrooms and laboratories and use updated technology and equipment to prepare them to succeed in the workplace. Researchers will only solve state, national and world problems by using state of the art laboratories, technology, equipment and services. Inspiring and preparing our students to become leaders in their fields of study will be accomplished in high tech spaces built for the next generation.

State resources to fund low income based undergraduate scholarships. As the state's land grant university, we have a responsibility to ensure access for all students. Scholarships that are based on financial need and structured thoughtfully can be important tools for increasing college access and success—especially for low-income students and those whose parents didn't go to college.
The paired strategic goals of "affordability" and "access" remain priorities for both the Board of Regents and SDSU. College funding concerns are a reality for most students preparing for the transition from high-school to college. This could be achieved through support of the Dakota Promise.